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ABSTRACT

The guide describes the mission, objective, and function of the Migrant Education Resources List and Information Network (MERLIN) and defines the scopes of interest currently identified as national priorities in migrant education. MERLIN is a federally funded project designed to improve interstate and intrastate coordination of migrant education activities through the development of a comprehensive national database of educational resources in a range of scopes relevant to the many needs of migrants. MERLIN's objective is to improve overall efficiency while providing a continuity of educational experience for the mobile child. MERLIN's major resource categories are a human resource file of migrant education experts, a programs file of projects specifically geared to migrant needs, and a special curricular methods and materials file. Current scopes of interest are the Migrant Student Record Transfer System, administrative needs, identification and recruitment, parent and community involvement, basic skills, culture, English as a second language, early childhood, special education, dropout prevention, credit accrual and graduation, career education, vocational education, and health and human services. Full implementation of MERLIN will provide administrators, teachers, educational researchers, support staff, and operating agencies with a current list of resources available from across the United States and Puerto Rico. (NEC)

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A GUIDE TO MERLIN

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MIGRANT EDUCATION RESOURCE LIST
AND INFORMATION NETWORK

AN
INTERSTATE/INTERORGANIZATION COORDINATION OF PROJECT BY:

ALASKA
ARIZONA
ARKANSAS
COLORADO
GEORGIA
ILLINOIS
INDIANA
MARYLAND
NEVADA
NEW YORK
NORTH CAROLINA
OHIO
OREGON
PENNSYLVANIA
UTAH
VIRGINIA
WASHINGTON
ERIC/CRESS
M.S.R.T.S.
NATIONAL CLEARINGHOUSE FOR BILINGUAL EDUCATION

WITH THE
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
ACTING AS PRIMARY GRANTEE AND FISCAL AGENT

funded
under the provisions of
SECTION 143 of CHAPTER I, ESEA

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Since MERLIN was funded in 1982, many people involved in the national migrant education program have provided direction to the project in identifying the needs of migrant educators in their goal to provide a quality education to our nation's migrant children. It would be too difficult to try to name them, but a special thanks goes to Joe Dunn and the MERLIN consortium members for their support and guidance, and to all people throughout the nation who have become a part of the database by sharing their expertise, programs and curriculum with migrant educators nationwide.

I especially wish to thank the following people for their contributions to the Guide to MERLIN: Dr. William Logan, Special Assistant to the Commissioner for Basic Education, Pennsylvania Department of Education and Jean di Sabatino, Pennsylvania Migrant Education Program for their help in developing the Basic Skills Scope; Dr. John Meerbach, Chief, Division of Student Services, Pennsylvania Department of Education, for developing the Scope for Career Education; Michael Reed, Pennsylvania Migrant Education Program for the MSRTS Scope; and to the staff of the National Clearinghouse of Bilingual Education for their guidance in developing the Scope format.

Lynne Berry
Project MERLIN
Pennsylvania Department of Education
June 1984

INTRODUCTION

The Guide to MERLIN describes the Mission, Objective and Function of the Migrant Education Resource List and Information Network (MERLIN), and defines the Scopes of Interest currently identified as national priorities in Migrant Education.

The Guide has been developed to acquaint you with the purpose of MERLIN, to provide a directory for data base users, and to establish guidelines for the acquisition of resources. The function and scope of MERLIN is by necessity limited, primarily because the many technical functions necessary to plan, develop and utilize a computerized information database must be accomplished within the grant proposal time frame.

The policy of MERLIN is that of neutrality. We will not take a particular advocacy position for any person, program or curriculum method. Evaluation of resources will be provided as part of a response as these evaluations are acquired. It is not the intent of MERLIN to overlap with the functions of a document clearinghouse, therefore, all acquisitions are screened for overlap, function and scope.

The Functions and Scopes outlined in this Guide are subject to revision on the basis of changing priorities in the field of Migrant Education.

MISSION

MERLIN is a federally funded project designed to improve interstate and intrastate coordination of migrant education activities through the development of a comprehensive national database of educational resources in a range of scopes relevant to the many needs of a migrant population.

OBJECTIVES

The MERLIN database is designed to allow the state education agencies (SEA), local education agencies (LEA) and other operating agencies to retain their own resources, and the control over them, while channeling and coordinating information about the availability of those resources through a centralized database. The object is to improve the overall efficiency of the organization while providing for a continuity of educational experience for the mobile child.

Full implementation of MERLIN will provide administrators, teachers, educational researchers, support staff and operating agencies involved in migrant education activities nationwide, with a current list of resources available from all parts of the country and Puerto Rico.

FUNCTIONS

Three major categories/files of resources have been identified as functions to be developed by MERLIN for migrant educators in order of priority as expressed by the MERLIN Consortium of States.

For many years state directors of migrant education have been aware of the wealth of expertise existing in all parts of the nation -- people possessing diversity of skills essential to providing excellence in educational practices to migrant students. A catalog of essential data on these experts had never been developed for national dissemination. The Human Resource File became our first priority.

Many of the professionals identified are involved with managing and developing programs specifically geared to the needs of the mobile population and many innovative projects have been developed through federal funding. The need to network Programs became our second priority.

MERLIN dissemination efforts over the past year have provided us with evidence that Special Curricular Methods and Materials are a critical need of migrant educators. This category became our third area of development in lieu of a file of fugitive documents called for in the project proposal. This choice not only affords a vehicle for meeting assessed needs, but provides for the elimination of overlap with the functions of the document clearinghouse.

In addition to the major resource categories, a limited manual file of literature is being developed from incoming educational sources such as journals, periodicals, newsletters, monographs and other scholarly publications, that may be of interest to migrant educators or be reproduced for the requestor as part of a response. This service should not be considered as a major function of MERLIN at this time.

MERLIN also provides literature searches of other data-bases to migrant educators in states that do not have access capabilities available within their own state. The project is charged for these searches and will not provide this service indiscriminately.

The three major functions/files of MERLIN are described in detail on the following pages.

HUMAN RESOURCES

File Description

The Professional People file includes, but is not limited to, resources with expertise in all facets of migrant education or in an area relevant to the needs of migrant children from infancy to adulthood. They possess expertise addressing the basic skills, individualized instruction, student placement and diagnosis, tutoring, computer instruction, communication skills, cultural understanding and appreciation, early childhood education, vocational education, special education, speech pathology, computer assisted education, bilingual education and ESL, music and the arts, prevention and treatment of juvenile delinquency, family enrichment, self esteem, all aspects of physical and mental health, safe use of pesticides, school dropout prevention, credit accrual for graduation and career education; administrative needs such as program development, evaluation and planning, fiscal management, needs assessment, MSRTS, fund allocation, interagency coordination, dissemination, stress management and technical experts in systems management; and skills such as parental involvement, parent organizations, school-community coordination, identification and recruitment. Resource people may be classified as keynote speakers, consultants, lecturers, workshop presenters, demonstrators, inservice providers, and educational researchers. They are experts whose services can be of value to researchers, SEAs, LEAs and agencies or people involved in migrant education in any way, at any level and in any state and Puerto Rico.

PROGRAMS

File Description

The program file includes a broad spectrum covering the basic migrant education programs providing instructional services to migrant children in year round programs, summer programs and the Section 143 projects.

Both individual model/exemplary programs and broad program design are of interest. Aspects of program administration, such as grantsmanship and financial support, program design, implementation, development and evaluation; effectiveness of specific programs or models; cost effectiveness, and strategies for educational change and improvement.

CURRICULAR MATERIALS AND METHODS

File Description

All aspects of curriculum and instruction relating to or adaptable for the education of migrant students from the early childhood level through adulthood are of interest. Although any conventional teaching methods and materials that can be applied to the migrant education setting is acceptable, emphasis is placed on methods and techniques that are specifically designed or adapted for use by teachers and students in migrant education programs. Print and nonprint curricular materials and the design, development, enrichment, implementation, evaluation and cost-effectiveness are included.

LIST OF SCOPES

M.S.R.T.S.

Administrative Needs

Identification and Recruitment

Parent and Community Involvement

Basic Skills

Culture

English as a Second Language

Early Childhood

Special Education

Dropout Prevention, Credit Accrual and Graduation

Career Education

Vocational Education

Health and Human Services

M.S.R.T.S.

Scope of Interest

The Migrant Student Record Transfer System is a national data base conceived and implemented with the fundamental purpose of storing and transferring educational and health data on the nation's 600,000 migrant children. The data base, located in Little Rock, Arkansas, stores quantities of data and transmits information in ways never possible before the emergence of the computer.

Each state has direct access "to the data base through one or more terminals." These terminals constitute the means by which records are updated and requested.

MSRTS, which has been in operation for almost 15 years, is capable of supplying states with much more than records on migrant children. It has become the source for determining funding; allowing migrant education to be one of the few programs funded on exact student counts. The computer can supply state directors with summary data on migrant education. The computer can summarize items like test scores, student enrollments or educational skills. In addition, its mere presence has formed interstate cooperation in diverse areas such as recruitment, secondary credit exchange and the creation of a nationally accepted list of educational skills.

ADMINISTRATIVE NEEDS

Scope of Interest

Administrators in migrant education are interested in the provision of supplemental educational services to migrant children as it relates to administrative needs assessment, staff development, funds allocation, fiscal management, proposal writing, recruiting methods, identification methods, student data exchange, pupil accounting, program evaluation, program development, information dissemination, interagency and interstate coordination and stress management.

IDENTIFICATION AND RECRUITMENT

Scope of Interest

The purpose of Identification and Recruitment is primarily of importance to the funding of individual state plans that provide for special services to migrant children. The focus is on training in methods of identifying and enrolling students in MSRTS, obtaining essential data of these students, understanding of migrant lifestyles and the organization of migrant education on the national level. Technical assistance is available in areas of recruiter training, dissemination of guidelines, design and revision of enrollment forms and on-site assistance; and methods and techniques for assessment of social needs of the family unit and in coordinating the activities of local parent advisory councils.

PARENT AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Scope of Interest

Parent and Community Involvement is of interest as both parents and the community play an active role in the quality and effectiveness of education for the migrant student. Parental Involvement includes all areas in which parents participate at the local, regional and national level and the impact of parent groups on the policies of migrant education. The focus is on effective parenting education, parental attitudes toward and aspirations for their children and their education; parent training for all types of parental involvement, and parent effectiveness in programs at the early childhood, elementary and secondary level; and relationships between parent and child, parent and teacher, parent and school administrator, and parent and school board. Community involvement is focused on community attitudes, responsibility, community cooperation and the individuals responsibility to and leadership role in the community; and availability of and access to all community resources and services.

BASIC SKILLS

Scope of Interest

The primary objective of migrant educators is to provide education to migrant children from preschool through high school in the basic skills as outlined in the nationally accepted Basic Skills List which includes math skills, English reading skills, Spanish reading skills, English oral language skills, Spanish oral language skills and Early Childhood skills. Of interest are program design, staff development, material development, adaptation and selection, test selection and testing procedures, diagnostic-prescriptive approaches to instruction, computer assisted instruction and management, and remediation and tutoring techniques.

CULTURE

Scope of Interest

Culture is of concern as it relates to the education, attitudes and self-image of the language minority students of a mobile population and the attitudes and behavior of the stable major culture, including attitudes of teachers toward the limited English proficient (LEP) migrant child. The focus is on techniques and methods to increase student awareness and appreciation of their own and other groups' cultural and social heritage; social-emotional adjustment, cultural maintenance and acculturation into the mainstream; and the effective development of attitudes to reduce bias, stereotyping and discrimination.

ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUACE

Scope of Interest

English as a Second Language as an element of Bilingual Education is of concern as it relates to theory and practice of teaching English to and learning English by non-English speaking migrant students, instructional practices, methodologies, assessment and program evaluation and involves: the structure of the English language including phonology, morphology, syntax and semantics; attitudes and motivation of ESL students and teachers as determined by socio-cultural and psychological factors; emotional and perceptual aspects of acquiring English as a second language; ESL for students illiterate in their native language, for special purposes such as the instruction of science, technical skills and vocational education; and the techniques and practices for preparation of mainstreaming into the regular classroom.

Scope of Interest

All aspects of Early Childhood Education, child development theory and research concerning children from birth to age eight are of importance to migrant educators. Interest on a broad level includes instructional design, development, innovation and evaluation of programs, curriculum and teaching methods and materials appropriate for and geared to the needs of the migrant child. Of particular concern is the development of: positive self-concept and understanding of the feelings of self and others; positive relation of the child with the family, peers and community; knowledge and understanding of the physical and natural world and human impact on the environment; favorable attitudes and behavior toward school and learning; skills in the cognitive processes such as inquiring, creating, observing, generalizing, experimenting, classifying, verifying, quantifying, evaluating and problem solving. Also of interest are verbal and non-verbal communication skills, development of personal expression and appreciation through literature and the arts, physical skills, motor coordination, health and safety practices and group interaction; and testing techniques, individual assessment, and placement for large group, small group and individualized instruction.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Scope of Interest

The education of special or exceptional children is of concern as it relates to limited-English proficient handicapped, handicapped, and gifted migrant students. Handicapped children include the hearing impaired, visually impaired, mentally retarded, physically handicapped, behaviorally disturbed, learning disabled, speech impaired and multiple handicapped. The gifted and talented include children with high academic ability, outstanding talents and/or high creative ability. Of interest are all testing, assessment and evaluation methods to accurately measure the person's aptitude, achievement level or whatever the test purports to measure; subject content and development of the individualized education program; the design, development, innovation and evaluation of curriculum methods, teaching materials and equipment; special bilingual programs, curriculum, and materials; and techniques of mainstreaming into the regular classroom.

DROPOUT PREVENTION, CREDIT ACCRUAL AND GRADUATION

Scope of Interest

All aspects of Dropout Prevention, Credit Accrual and Graduation are of interest to migrant educators as it relates to the extremely high dropout rate and the severe limitations that the lack of education places on the personal and economic growth of the migrant youth. The impetus nationally, is on the methods and techniques to provide motivation to remain in or return to school, acquisition of credits through interstate and intrastate cooperation, and prevocational and vocational guidance in development of skills and/or acquiring postsecondary education. On a broad level the focus is on curricular design, development, enrichment, innovation, evaluation and cost effectiveness of programs for providing academic assistance, counseling, cultural enrichment, career planning and support services for reducing the dropout rate and increasing opportunity for alternate lifestyles for migrant students.

CAREER EDUCATION

Scope of Interest

Career Education is of particular importance to migrant educators as it relates to the aim of migrant education - to provide the child with options of lifestyle. Emphasis is on an infusion of career relevant curricula into the regular classroom activities, from the elementary grades through high school, providing for an understanding of the nature and purpose of subject matter as it relates to specific careers and occupations. Of interest is instructional design, development, innovation and evaluation of methods and materials in guidance techniques for understanding self, personal attributes, interests and abilities as it relates to career choices, and in developing a healthy self-concept; and instructional practices and methods for developing skills in decision-making, productive use of time and career development activities which prepare the student to seek, obtain and ultimately hold jobs.

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

Scope of Interest

The interest in vocational education for migrant educators is much like that of Career Education with the additional acquisition of a specific job skill. Of interest is instructional design, development and evaluation of curriculum and instruction in the single skill operatives, highly skilled and technical occupations, and methods of preparation for certification and licensing requirements.

Scope of Interest

This scope involves all factors relevant to the physical and mental health of migrant families. It includes educational practices, community services, medical treatment, immunization and screening; curricular materials, methods and programs for all age levels in health, safety, drivers, physical and sex education; and special projects in water safety, safe use of pesticides, drug and alcohol abuse, teenage pregnancy, and the prevention of child abuse and neglect.